

Indigenization of Thesis Acknowledgement in English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia

Agustinus Ngadiman

Abstract. This study is an attempt of investigating the rhetoric of thesis acknowledgement by English Department Students. Data of this study are composed of 200 students' thesis acknowledgements written over a period of ten years (1997-2007). The Thesis acknowledgements (TAs) were collected solely from the English Department of Widya Mandala Chatolic University. The study shows that the students' TAs (a) are colored with various kinds of formulaic expression, Grice's maxim flouting, and parallel syntactic construction, (2) employ Hierarchical Pattern of gratitude expression, and circular or repetitive patterns of thought.

Key Words: rhetoric, acknowledgement.

The concept of new Englishes presupposes that those territories where English is used as a second or foreign language variety (e.g., India, Indonesia) have a different cultural background from that of the L1 (native speakers) in "Western world". Term like nativization, Indigenization, contextualization, and acculturation (Kachru 1990) used in the description of these varieties attest to this difference. Because these linguistic adaptations are mainly induced by the cultural background of the L2/FL speakers, sociolinguistic approach (which emphasize the role in the formation of new Englishes) has been widely used in the analysis of English in this context. This approach situates L2/FL varieties of English within the sociocultural context of their use. Its emphasis is on the functional uses and the adaptation required suiting the variety to the demands made on it. It is not merely concerned with formal aspects of language, but goes into cultural based norms of appropriateness. As non-native Englishes are concerned, this approach accepts them as "what they are" and they are not as 'interference varieties' (Quirk, et, al, 1985:27-28) or imperfect approximations of native norms. This implies that 'nativization processes are recognized and innovations in language and style are considered as indexical markers' (Bamgbose, 1997: 15).

One outcome of the sociolinguistic approach to the study of new Englishes is the successful correlation between the rhetorical thought patterns of L2/FL speakers and the written texts they produce in English. A number of studies on writing across cultures have emphasized the socio-cultural and ethnographic factors in such text structures (cf. Y. Kachru 1987a, 1987, 1992; Choi 1988; Clayn 1987; Hinds 1987). Most of these studies, especially Kachru (1986) have used data from Indian English to "successfully" proof the following hypotheses: (a) written texts produced by bilinguals in L2 will show effects of the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the L1 environment; (b) the writing convention

followed by bilingual student population will show effects of the L1 socialization.

Kaplan (1966) discusses these adaptations within the context of “Cultural thought pattern” in intercultural communication. His claim is that each language has a cultural thought pattern and that patterns of rhetoric are, however, culturally relative. For example according to Kaplan the English language and its related thought pattern has evolved out of the Anglo-European cultural pattern, and it is predominantly linear in sequence which contrasts with many thinking in other cultures. Subsequently he (Kaplan 1987) argues that all of the various rhetorical modes are possible in any language, but maintained that each language has clear preferences, and that the full range of forms does not occur with equal frequency in any used language.

The relationship between underlying thought patterns and language in Oriental Englishes have been investigated and documented to illustrate what may considered the Oriental rhetorical pattern by various researches, such as Fagan and Cheong (1987), Kachru, (1988), Chantane Indrasuta, (1988), Hinds, (1990) and Lee and Scarcella (1992). Lee and Scarcella (1992), for example, found that in producing good essays, Korean writers do not generally follow the same Western writing process. In a good Korean expository essay writers do not usually state their thesis directly. Rather they often allow the reader to interpret the thesis from hints within the text. Kachru (1988), in her effort to illustrate the difference between the conventions of writing in English and in Hindi, found that the conventions of writing in Hindi seem to differ from those of American English. The difference, however, is not categorical. The structure of a paragraph in Hindi is not always “circular” or “spiral”. There are paragraphs that exhibit the straight linear structure which is the preferred structure for expository writing in English and there are paragraphs that exemplify the spiral/circular structure

One very important area of research in English in the “Outer Circle” has been on the extent to which text types have become nativized in the home culture. Although there has been interest in the study and analysis of nativization of literary texts in the past few decades, non-literary text types have not received the same attention. Yet in English non-native settings non-literary text types are considered to be very productive area of research into nativization of English. This present study is an attempt to explore the specificity illustrating the rhetorical features of oriental English, especially Indonesian English as manifested in thesis acknowledgement by English Department students in Indonesia. In short this present inquiry tried to answer the following question:

What rhetorical features of the thesis acknowledgement written by English Department students illustrating the specificity of Indonesian English?

Methodology

Data of this study are composed of 200 students' thesis acknowledgements written over a period of ten years (1997-2007). The Thesis acknowledgements (TAs) were collected solely from the English Department of Widya Mandala Chatolic University. In this institution the writing of a thesis is an essential and compulsory requirement for students to obtain their end-of-course diploma, which qualifies them as teachers of English in secondary and high schools as a foreign language in Indonesia. Because these theses are defended in front of examiners consisting of four to five lecturers, students consider writing theses as an exercise in academic achievement. This is the hardest effort they have to accomplish in their study that need academic, financial, facility and spiritual supports from others, thesis advisors, librarian, parents, friend, and God.

Because these texts are culturally and situationally highly bound, the investigation relied not only on the sociolinguistic approach generally used in such analysis, but also on the culturally-based approach and Grice's Co-cooperative principle. The data were analyzed on the basis of on the basis of theory of contrastive rhetorical analysis.

Findings

1. Rhetorical Style

1. 1 Routine and Formulaic

The first feature found in the Students' TAs is that almost all the TAs in the corpus analyzed use a deferential strategy of some kind. This discourse strategy is very much part of the etiquette of the Indonesian community in which writers of these texts are members, a long tradition in most Indonesian societies where respect for older people and for authority has been paramount. This view is manifested in some kinds of formulaic expressions. The formulas involved a small umber of fixed syntactic patterns and a narrow range of lexical items. There four kinds of formulaic expressions of gratitude found in the TAs analyzed, gratitude to (1) God, (2) advisors, (3) parents/friends, and (4) other people who cannot be mentioned one by one. Table 1 below illustrates the formulaic expressions of gratitude to God.

Table 1
Formulaic Expressions of Gratitude to God

No	Expressions	Number	%
1	First of all/above all I/the writer would like to express my greatest gratitude and honor to God who has supported, encouraged, and poured His Constant love during my study and especially in the accomplishment of/finishing this thesis; without him, I would not have been able to finish this work		

2	I would like thank the Almighty God for His Blessing, wisdom, and strength to me during the accomplishment of this thesis. I realize that it is impossible for me to finish it without His Grace.		
3	The writer would like to give thanks/to tank God the Almighty/Allah SWT/ to Lord Jesus Christ the SAVIOUR for His Strength, blessing, mercy, and loving-kindness (for everything). He has given her unforgettable experience		
4	Thank God, in the name of Jesus Christ, finally I could finish my thesis after a very long time.		

The second expression of gratitude was addressed to the thesis advisors. The thesis writers commonly express gratitude to their advisors for their academic support, patience, precious time spent, and encouragement. The typical formulaic expressions of gratitude to the advisors are illustrated in the following table. As presented in table 2 below.

Table 2
Formulaic Expressions of Gratitude to Advisors

No	Formulaic Expression	Number	%
1	I (personally)/she would like to express/to convey/to acknowledge my/her deepest/sincere/cordial gratitude/her debt ... for all their/his/her help and patience/ his precious time, valuable suggestion and advice for the improvement of this thesis/ valuable encouragement and suggestion ...		
2	Her deepest thanks and appreciation		
	A special notes of appreciation/Her gratitude/appreciation /deepest tanks and appreciation goes/ would go/.is offered to her advisor who has given guidance and assistance in planning, writing and improving		
3	She owes a great debt of gratitude to		
4	A special thanks is also offered to		

The third type of expressing gratitude was addressed to parents. Typically the formulaic expressions of gratitude to parents, family (brother, sister, relatives) are formulated as follows.

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents/family/mother who has given her spirit and assistance

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents who have always supported and encouragement

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents/family/mother who for giving mental and financial support

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents/family/mother who have given help, support, and prayer

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents/family/mother who for their support, love, encouragement, prayers

Finally, the writer wishes to express her deep appreciation and her gratitude to her dear parents/family/mother who have given support mentally and financially

This thesis is dedicated with honor to my mother, X and deepest gratitude to my father, Y, and my sister, Z, for their love and support.

Many other people were also considered important in the thesis writing process. This is reflected in the gratitude expressions to those whose names are not explicitly stated. The other formulaic expressions are exemplified below.

Finally, the writer also thanks to those whose name cannot be mentioned one by one but whose supports and helps are not the least to make this thesis completed in its present time.

At last, the writer also offers her sincere thanks for everyone who cannot be mentioned yet cannot be forgotten.

Finally her sincere thanks to all her friend who have not been mentioned here one by one.

1.2 Excessive Praise

Excessive praise another rhetorical style found in the theses analyzed. First, an excessive praise was given to God. God was praised for everything and is regarded the source of everything, the blessing, grace, inspiration, courage, spirit. The excessive praise was addressed to the first advisor. The gratitude was extended to the advisors for their help, guidance, guidance, patience, support, time spent, advices, etc. This excessive praise and gratitude are exemplified below.

My deepest gratitude goes to my advisor, Y, for his help, guidance, comments, and valuable suggestions in accomplishing this thesis.

First, the writer would like to thank her advisor for his time, advices and guidance in finishing this thesis. Without his help and support, the writer would have never been able to complete this thesis.

A special note of appreciation goes to my first advisor... for his help, guidance comments, and valuable suggestions in accomplishing this thesis and also for his advice for the coming future.

In these examples Grice's maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and manner are flouted in many respects. The requirements to show excessive appreciation sometimes override the need for brevity and precision. These examples also show the extent to which students hold their lecturers in high esteem, not just because they have supervised their research, but more importantly because they are senior people to them. The piling up words and expressions showing respect amounts of subjugation of self to the authority of the lecturer whom the candidates is invincible, 'all knowing and 'all-wise'

1.3 Modesty

In addition to the excessive praise lavished to the supervisor/advisors, expressing a lower opinion about one's own ability, knowledge, skills and success than is probably deserved is common in Indonesian. Expressing one's own ability and success as they are is considered arrogant. Therefore, hiding his own quality is considered a true Indonesian, instead of exposing to public. This principle is also manifested in the TAs analyzed. This modesty feeling is manifested in the following formulaic expressions

Without their help the writer would not have brought this thesis into its present form

Without their help this thesis would have never been accomplished as it should be.

The writer is so aware that this thesis is far from being perfect, therefore it is a pleasure for her to accept constructive criticisms to improve it.

I admit that this thesis is still far from perfection. I believe that readers' criticisms and suggestions will somehow make it better.

1.4 Parallelism

Another rhetorical style found in the TAs analyzed is parallelism, the form of one sentence or clause repeats the form of another (Cooks, 1990: 15), such as used in speech and prayers.

First of all, I would like to thank God who has inspired me to write this thesis and who has blessed me and made me everything possible to finish this thesis under His holly providence. For him I present I present this thesis.

My gratitude goes to my advisor, Dr. A. M.Pd, for his help, guidance, and valuable suggestions in accomplishing thus thesis.

Besides, I thank all the lecturers for their assistance in guiding me doing my study in Widya Mandala, the librarians for their patience and help in finding the necessary books for this thesis.

My thank goes to my best friend, X, Y, and Z who have given me support, comments and suggestions when I was writing this thesis.

At last, I personally would like to express my gratitude to my parents, my brother, and my sister who, have supported me with their prayers and who have helped me getting the needed data. May all their kindness and help be rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the acknowledgement above the grammatical structures repeated are:

- (1) I would like to tank X, who ... V ..., and who ... V
- (2) My gratitude goes to X for

The following acknowledgement exemplifies another style of parallelism used. The grammatical structures repeated are:

- (1) The writer would like to give X to who
- (2) The writer would like to to the following persons
 - (a) X1, who
 - (b) X2, who
 - (c) X3, who

After finishing this thesis, the writer would like to give greatest gratitude to the beloved Father who guided her during the process of writing thesis.

The writer would like to give her deep compliment to the following persons who were willing to help her finishing this thesis, mainly

- (1) *Dr. X, the fist advisor, who checked and advised her thesis patiently, and also who supported her to finish it*
- (2) *Prof Dr. Y M. Sc, the second advisor, who always helped and supported to finish her thesis*
- (3) *Her beloved Parents who always encouraged to finish her thesis*

- (4) *His friends, A and B, who always gave supports her during bad times.*

2. Hierarchical Pattern of Expressing Gratitude Representing Metaphor of “Community”

In an attempt to figure out how the image of “community” is reflected in the overall configuration of TAs, it is important to distinguish the Indonesian concept of the term from a typical western understanding of it. While in the western world, family and community form two distinct conceptual domains, in traditional and localized Indonesian setting, especially Javanese setting, “family” and “community” constitute only one domain. How this knowledge of culture translates to language choices and/or style is reminiscent of how genre is realized –indexically..

From the point of view of “community”, the structure of most of the TAs used in this study portrays not only a social hierarchy that would be found in a traditional setting, but also tacitly

The first feature found in the Students’ TAs is that almost all the TAs in the corpus analyzed use a deferential strategy of some kind. This discourse strategy is very much part of the etiquette of the Indonesian community in which writers of these texts are members, a long tradition in most Indonesian societies where respect for older people and for authority has been paramount.

There are five hierarchical patterns of gratitude reflecting order of role that other people took in the accomplishment of thesis writing. These hierarchical patterns of role (importance) are presented in the table below.

Table 3
Hierarchical Pattern of expressing Gratitude

No	Patterns	Total	%
1	G-P-A1-A2-AS-L-F-O-P		
2	G-A1-A2-AS-L-F-P-O		
3	G-A1-A2-O		
4	P-A1-A2-F-O	4	

These hierarchical patterns of role reflect that the contribution given by those people varies from person to person, in terms of the importance and the kinds of support given. These hierarchical patterns also reflect order of superiority and importance of the people involved in writing the thesis and the kinds of support given.

As manifested in patterns 1, 2, and 3, God was the most superior, above all. He was the source of everything they needed for the accomplishment of the theses.

First of all, the writer would like to tank God for his help and grace and blessing and every single thing

First of all, the writer would like to thank God for his Grace, blessing and help in accomplishing this thesis, without Him, this would never happen.

First of all, I would like to thank god, who always gives me the way best thing in my life and he always helps me especially during the preparation and the examination of this thesis.

Above all thank to God for his blessing, mercies, help and owe dedicate gratitude to Saint Holy Mary who is always with her in completing the thesis

Above all, I praise God for His Grace and Blessing so that this final assignment can be accomplished in the due time

The expressions of gratitude to God also reflect the writers' belief that spiritual support and blessing were the most powerful during the hardest work. God was, therefore, placed in the first, highest position. He was then the "person" first mentioned.

Pattern 4 reflects that parents were the most important persons in the process of accomplishing the thesis. Most thesis writers taking this pattern stated that, besides providing thesis writers with financial support, parents gave them mental support that encouragement for accomplishing the hardest work they had.

After finishing this thesis I felt happy and relieved and would like to give my great gratitude to my parents who guided me during the process of writing this thesis.

In addition to the importance of the contributors, the kinds of supports is also rank as follows (1) mental support, (2) academic/intellectual support, (3) financial, and (4) facility. Thus mental support is considered the most important and is put in top rank followed by intellectual, financial, and facility supports

These forms of 'veneration' illustrated above are very much associated with the Indonesian way of life. Here people live in community where the burden of each member is that of the entire group and people are expected to behave as such.

Conclusion

The preceding analyses have sought that the TAs by English Department Students in Indonesia are significantly (at least on the basis of the data in this study) culturally contextualized. The main conclusion that can be drawn therefore is that some background knowledge of "culture" (of Indonesians) is essential in order to properly understand texts products in this setting.

This view naturally leads to the crucial "culture" plays in an understanding of non-native English-texts. As presupposed, taken - for-granted models of the world widely shared by other members of

community (Quinn and Holland, 1987), a culture” models out of thoughts and shapes our behaviors. Understanding texts produced in a specific non-English cultural setting may therefore involve a proper appreciation of the people there. This calls for academic cross-fertilization and interdisciplinary approach to linguistic research in English L2/FL communities, where findings from anthropology, sociology and psychology may be relevant. While such an enterprise remains to be pursued, it may still be relevant to make statements on context-specific characteristics of TAs in Indonesia.

References

- Bamgbose, Ayo. 1997. Non-native Englishes on Trials. In ME Kropp Daub (ed). *Englishes in Ghana: Proceedings of the Inaugural Meeting of the Ghana English Studies Associations*, held at the University of College Education, Winneba, June 13-15, 1996 (99-210)
- Choi, Yeon-Hee. 1988. *Text Structure of Korean Students' Argumentation Essays in English*. *World Englishes* 7; 129-42
- Clayn, Michael. 1987. *Discourse Structure and Discourse Expectations: implication for Anglo-German Academic Communication*. In Lary Smith (ed) *Discourse Across culture: strategies in World Englishes*, 73-83. New York; Prentice-Hall.
- Cooks, Guy. 1990. *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fagan, Edward H, and Peggy Cheong. 1987. *Contrastive Rhetoric: Pedagogical Implications for the ESL Teacher in Singapore*. in *RELC Journal* Vol. 10 no. 1. June 1987. (19-30).
- Grice, Paul. H. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (eds). *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*. 41-58. New York: Academic Press.
- Hinds, Joyce. 1987. *Reader vs Writer Responsibility: a New Typology*. In Ulla, Connor and Robert Kaplan. (Eds) *Reading*. 132-52. Mass: Addison-Wiley.
- Hinds, Johns. 1990. Inductive, Deductive, Quasi-inductive: Expository Writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai. In Connor, Ulla and Ann M, Johnes (eds). 1990. *Coherence in Writing. Research and Pedagogical Perspectives*. Alexandria, Virginia: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (87-109)
- Kachru, Yamuna. 1985. *Discourse Strategies, Pragmatics and ESL: Where are We going?* *RELC Journal*. 16 (1) 1-17.

- Kachru, Yamuna. 1988. Writers in Hindi and English. in Purves, Allan C. 1988. *Writing Across Languages and Cultures*. Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. (109-137).
- Kachru, Yamuna. 1987. Cross-cultural Texts, Discourse Strategies and Discourse Interpretation. In Smith, Larry E. (ed). 1987; *Discourse Across Cultures*. Strategies in World Englishes. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd. (87-100).
- Kaplan, Robert B. 1980. *Cultural thought Patterns in Intercultural Education*. In Croft (ed). 1980. *Readings on English as a Second Language for Teachers and Teacher Trainees*. Boston: Little Brown and Company: 399-418.
- Kaplan, Robert B. 1987. *Cultural Thought Patterns Revisited*. In Connor, Ulla and Robert B. Kaplan (eds). 1987. *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text*. California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. (9-21).
- Kaplan, Robert B. 1988. *Contrastive Rhetoric and Second Language Learning: Notes Toward a Theory of Contrastive Rhetoric*. In Purves, Allan C (ed). 1988. *Writing Across Languages and Cultures*. Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. (275-304).
- LoCastro, Virginia. 1988. Aizuchi: A Japanese Conversational Routine. In. Smith, Larry E. 1987. *Discourse Across Cultures. Strategies in World Englishes*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.(101-113).
- Lee, David. 1992. *Competing Discourses. Perspective and Ideology in Language*. Singapura: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte) Ltd.
- Lee, Chunk and Robin Scarcella. 1992. *Building upon Korean Writing Practices: Genres, Values, and Beliefs*. In Dubin, Fraida and Natalie A. Khulman (eds). 1992. Cross-cultural Literacy. *Global Perspectives on Reading and Writing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Regents/Prentice Hall.
- Purves, Allan C. 1988. *Writing Across Language and Culture. Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Quinn and Holland, 1987. *Culture and Cognition*. In Dorothy Holland and Naomi Quinn (eds) *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (pp. 3-40). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press